

# IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO LIVE.

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DEDICATED TO OUR FAITHFUL SOLDIERS.

Few of the human family are so reckless as to be void of seriousness, in view of the fact that they must *die*.— In heathen as well as in christian lands, all possess an instinctive shrinking from approaching dissolution. The soldier, who goes forth in defence of his country, fondly hopes that he shall pass through the deadliest conflicts that await him, and not fall into the embraces of the destroyer. There are many reasons why men prefer not to die; but the dread of the unknown future, with its tremendous realities, is that which, more than aught else, binds them to life.

Now, while it is greatly wise to think much on *death*, it is equally so, to think on "the life that now is;" yet I fear that many who may chance to read this, bestow but little reflection on the subject. I propose, therefore, a few suggestions on the solemnities associated with *living*; hop-

ing that they may serve, at least, to awaken serious reflection on this great subject.

*First*, then, I observe, our creator has invested us with certain faculties and susceptibilities, in the use of which, to glorify him. He would have us consecrate all those powers to the well-being of our race, and thereby bring honor to His great name. It is a sad mistake, made by many, that he contemplates simply our individual happiness. He calls us into His vineyard, that, having entered it, we may labor for the advancement of the true interests of our race. How solemn the thought, that instead of "serving their day and generation," thousands are prostituting their immortal powers to the pleasures of sense; unmindful altogether of this most reasonable requirement of their Maker. Better had such persons never lived than to be making utter shipwreck of their qualifications for doing good.

*Secondly*, It is impossible for any to *live*, without exerting an influence upon those around them, either for weal or for woe. All have influence, devolving upon them the most fearful responsibilities; and it is melancholy, that very many, not only madly refuse to labor for the good of their fellows, but are indulging in practices, the imitation of which, without Divine intervention, must lead others the downward road. To have lived here, to no better purpose than to effect the ruin of immortal beings, were worse than never to have lived at all. I repeat, then, it is a fearful—an awful thing to *live*.

*Thirdly*, It is while men *live*, that they bid defiance to the laws of the God of the universe, and slight and despise His infinite goodness. Thus they subject themselves to the penalties due to rebellion. Sustained by His bountiful providence, and fostered continually by His kindly

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guardianship ; by persisting in sin, they develope a heartlessness which is "nigh unto cursing." Had they never *lived*, of course, they had never deserved as they do, "the vengeance of eternal fire." Never could they have turned away from Him, who so sweetly invites to come and enlist under Hi banner.

Again, He who *lives* in this world, must live forever. Live we must, since we live at all, as long as He who gave us life shall live. As, therefore, we can never cease to live ; and as life beyond the grave must needs be made happy or miserable by the manner in which we live here, how solemn the fact that we ever began life's endless career ! Better, methinks, had it been for many, if the All-wise had spared them an introduction to this mortal existence. Let none indulge the impious thought, however, that He who knew the end from the beginning, committed an error, when He breathed into their nostrils the breath of life ; for rely upon it, He designed us all for His glory, which can be promoted in no way so effectually as by our giving our hearts to Him, and employing our time and talents in His reasonable and delightful service.

Some one, perhaps may say, "if what the writer says is true, that it is a fearful thing to *live*, I wish I had never lived." Such a wish is simply vain. You *do* live, and although you might commit suicide, it would but transfer you from time to eternity, there to continue forever, the life begun on God's footstool.

In view of the above considerations, what is necessary to render life here, and life hereafter, a blessing rather than a curse ? I rejoice that "Grace has contrived a way" by which the awfulness associated with living may be done away ; and every one who will embrace it be made to rejoice that he is counted worthy a place among the

sons of men. When Jesus lived, he laid the plan by which *we* may live by faith in him; and when he died he finished the work necessary to our living with him beyond the swellings of Jordan. Reader, will you avail yourself at once, of His all-sufficient atonement? Soldier, will *you*? Let me here observe, that there is no class of men for whom I feel a deeper solicitude, than the noble defenders of our rights, civil, political and religious. You have bared your bosoms to the cannon's mouth; and your lives may be said to be in jeopardy every hour. I would to God, that you were all prepared for living, and for dying, that you might live eternally with Christ in the upper mansions.

Allow me, affectionately, to exhort you so to live, so to repent, and so to trust in Christ, that, whether you live long or die soon, you may be counted worthy, through Jesus, of an "inheritance with the saints in light." What you do, should be done quickly; for during the next few months, many, very many of you may be called to stand before your Judge. Let not the arch-deceiver of mankind, beguile you longer; but with a fixedness of purpose commensurate with the value of the immortal spirit, determine to prove the efficacy of that blood which cleanseth from all sin; and great shall be your reward.

Oh! where shall rest be found?  
 Rest for the weary soul;  
 'Twere vain the ocean's depths to sound,  
 Or pierce to either pole.